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BEAUTY;

AN ODE:

WITH A

DEDICATION

TO HER GRACE

THE DUCHESS OF R*****.

“Vera incessu patuit Dea,
“Undique.” VIRGIL.

BY TALIESSEN DE MONMOUTH.



Tal: inv. et del.

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TO HER GRACE

THE DUCHESS OF R*****.

MADAM,

SHOULD I be condemned for presumption in dedicating to your Grace this poetic effusion without your permission, I am sure the sensible part of the world will think the crime extenuated by the merit of the discrimination.

"*Detur pulcherrimam*" was the motto on the golden apple of old. Transferring that motto to my Ode, it as naturally flies to the Duchess of R——, as the fruit of Ida did to Venus.

Indeed, when I reflected on the infinite delicacy of your Grace's feelings, it struck me, that probably on

application for the honour of your name, your Grace would have demurred, on the inference, that somewhat of vanity might be implicated in the allowance to an ODE ON BEAUTY. I am free to believe, that the possessors of super-eminent qualities naturally enough might be touched with such an amiable weakness; but, at the same time, I am as sure the great mind would as uniformly reject it. Be it as it may, I decided to run the hazard of a frown (if ever a frown could get possession of the pleasantest face in the world) rather than not have in front what I esteem the *palladium* of my Poem.

By philosophical investigation, Madam, Beauty is found to be the first great principle of the Universe, and co-existing with Eternity. It's appearances are as infinite, as they are indefinite. We will examine one of its classes;—the female world: we may there speak of Beauty as St. Paul did of Glory:—"There is," says he, "one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another of the stars, for one star differs
" from

“ from another star in glory.” Step we into the drawing-room—Beauty there glows in every class and gradation: There is one beauty of the Princess —, another beauty of the Countess —, and another of the Lady —; but the Duchess of R— differs from them, that is, eclipses them all in Beauty.

Were antient times to revolve, and the same golden apple to be thrown down into the Court of St. James's, with the same inscription, I think the contention would not be of long continuance, were your Grace inclined to step forwards. But should it be disputed, (as I know no place where opposition runs stronger) and the ‘ultimatum’ for the decision of the Trojan shepherd insisted on, I am sure your Grace would instantly carry it hollow.

I remember to have read an extraordinary dedication of a Sermon to Lady C. RUSSEL, (now the amiable Duchess of Marlborough) which begins with the Italian proverb, “that handsome girls are born married.” Not,

says the facetious writer, that marriages are made in Heaven; but such is the power of Beauty over the heart of man, that the possessors may be married whenever they please. This, indeed, may be the case in the British dominions, where tyrannical Beauty sees its crowds of slaves, but it was, till of late, otherwise on the Continent. There Beauty was often nothing-niz'd by harshness parental, or religious enthusiasm. How has my heart bled at seeing, as I once saw, a beautiful young virgin burst into tears on taking the veil! her heart went not with her vow: and it was whispered that her father, ambitious for the aggrandizement of his son, was the common *routine* of their best families, forced her to celibacy at the time her affections were set on a young man of great merit. Thank God, that reign of Folly and Madness is past! Church tyranny is no more: that tyranny, which for so many ages has stained history with the unnatural inhumations in Nunneries and Coenobies of troops of Beauties, who carried Paradise in their arms. Reason has abolished it, and Beauty is allowed its full range and dominion. But what shall

shall we say to those self-devoted of our present day? Those Beauties who prefer celibacy to the communicating of happiness? This is rebellion against Heaven, indeed! nor is it inaptly reprehended by the following lines in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, addressed to one of these cold moon-worshipping damsels:

“ Confider, MARIA, your charms are a sin,

“ Unless you obey the soft instinct within :

“ Not love !—ah, relent, and your beauties resign

“ To me, or to Love that is equal to mine.”

V. MAG. JUNE 1791.

Your Grace's *debut* fulfilled, in the first instance, the end of your creation. You were no rebel: you gave your fine hand in marriage, and the world is happy in beholding the emanations of your beauty springing up around you. Yet that same world cannot think the duty completed, seeing the will of Fate has set you again in your first predicament. Nature, all-bounteous to you, frowns upon your sequestering that wealth of charms so liberally bestowed. Your Grace must be obedient: it will be quite time enough to be a Devotée when grey
 hairs

hairs and wrinkles point out the hermitage: till then, which is at so great a distance, condescend to elect that man whose deserts are equal to your own. Methinks I hear you say—‘Shew him me’—I confess I am pos’d—that man does not exist. In truth, after this I can say no more, than that I pray Heaven to produce one, for it is less good for woman to live in *single blessedness* than for man to be alone.

My wishes for your enjoying that happiness which you can communicate so fully, arise from the sincere fountain of good-will, which, with my Poem, are the devoted offerings of,

MADAM,

Your Grace’s

Most obedient and very humble

Friend and Admirer,

TALIESSEN DE MONMOUTH.

ARGU-

ARGUMENTUM.

THE appearance of Spring, the reign of Beauty—philosophical and moral Beauty! The idea of Beauty existed from Eternity—but realised in the productions of worlds—is found in all the works of Nature—in the landscapes of the earth—in the forms of animals—picturesque perfection in all: in huge rocks—in the ocean agitated by storms, and illuminated by lightning—in woods and forests—in antique oaks—but greatest in the human form;—also in the fine Arts—such as architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry. Yet Beauty is lost without Taste; they are twin sisters. The enjoyment of Beauty cannot be without repose of mind: that repose derives from competence and health, and a regulated society. Repose of mind the greatest metaphysical Beauty: that state, when exalted by Taste, the greatest possible happiness, and the enjoyment of all things.

Nature is Beauty understood. Beauty, the means employed by Nature for peopling the world : this impulse of Nature, refined in mankind by delicacy of sentiment, is the highest rapture : but this delicacy of sentiment was unknown in antient times ; exemplified by the Centaurs at the marriage feast of the Lapithæ. Nor was this war the only one arising from Beauty : the destruction of Troy derived from the Beauty of Helen. That war arose from the Demon of Discord throwing the Golden Apple, inscribed—" To the greatest Beauty." Juno, Pallas, and Venus, contend for it : the Trojan Shepherd appointed Judge : the pretensions of each candidate. He demands a view for decision : the appearance of each described. Paris is in doubt : till Cupid, by a crafty device, decides him in favour of his mother Venus.

BEAUTY ;

B E A U T Y;

A N O D E.

"Vera incessu patuit Dea,

"Indique."

W H A T glorious forms in yonder sky .

Come sailing on in majesty ?

Why sing the chorists of the grove

With double rhapsodies of love ?

Why glows the air with double heat ?—

'Tis Nature's blush—'tis Nature's treat !

Spring rides on high on Cupid's plumes,

With Zephyr shedding new perfumes.

Beauty's full reign : she stands confest,

In every element impress.

Great Nature's Goddess, sovereign in her pow'r,

Warms with her joy—now Winter's rule is o'er.

Beauty ! I feel thy influence divine :

Not more the philosophic soul

Tastes rapture Nature to define,

In Beauty's geometric line,

And trace the planets as they roll.

Nor *he** who shew'd th' Athenian youth

The form sublime of moral Truth.

From dark Eternity rever'd,

Beauty existed in the Mind supreme,

Till call'd to life, what time appear'd

Worlds on worlds in bliss extreme.

Innumerable as the Ocean's sand,

Scatter'd as with a careless hand :

Awful ! in fields of space immense.

Yet each to Sage's curious view,

In movement soft, divinely true,

Inform'd by high Omnipotence.

* Plato.

Eternal

Eternal Wisdom sees, approves,
Beauty, which each reflexive spirit loves.

Where'er I look, where'er I turn,
I see thy works, I see and burn.
Beauty! thy touch comes boldly forth
In tints of flood, of air, of earth.
In ev'ry animal I trace
Design, and colour—composition, grace:
The Stallion's flashing eye, and fiery mane;
The Greyhound's spring in contests on the plain:
The Pheasant's neck—the proud Swan's majesty;
The sprightly Wren's fine turns of ecstasy:
The gilded Fly, not dress'd in vain;
And Serpent beauteous in his dreadful train:

In Rock's vast grandeur—Ocean's massy bound,
Beauty's boldest style is found:

Nor

Nor less that Ocean's lofty roll
When lightnings flash, and thunders howl.

The Forest's wildness gives the eye
Beauty in fine diversity.

The towering Oak's majestic head;
Capricious branches, grandly spread;
Or time-struck, shew a proud decay,
The hero of an antient day :
Shews of a thousand years the scars,
And Heav'n's artillery of a thousand years.

But far 'bove all in Man's fine frame,
Beauty demands a glorious name.

Where find the Bard whose song shall trace—
The Titian, whose high touch refin'd,
Shall give the smiles of CLARA's face,
Those sun-beams of a spotless mind :

Those

Those smiles, where hosts of cherubs play
 Like atoms in the solar ray :
 Those smiles, of sweet content the sign,
 Nature's *chef d'œuvre*, confess'd divine.

In souls of scientific lore,
 The fine arts tell high Beauty's pow'r;
 Where rises proud the Column's height;
 Where Temples shed their solemn light;
 Where Sculpture bids the rough rock start,
 A Venus rising—steals the heart :
 Where RUBENS shews his splendid trait,
 Or Reynolds—Zeuxis of our day,—
 Taste with delight each touch minute surveys,
 As from the all-combin'd proclaims the master's praise.

Nor less when Music's melodies arise

Like incense from the flow'ry lands,

Sublime in grandest glorious harmonies,

When Giant HANDEL's soul expands.

What

What Beauty there the mind observes,

How vibrate Sensibility's fine nerves !

High Poefy fublimér holds its fway ;

Her Beauty's call the Gods themfelves obey.

APOLLO ftruck the fweet-ton'd lyre ;

The chords which gave refinement birth :

He lit that all-pervading fire,

And drew the Mufes down to earth.

They, beft of friends the Gods beftow,

To raife our joy, or mitigate our woe.

What rapture fills the well-fraught breaft,

In their high Temple's fhade to dwell !

Where HOMER ftands their prieft confeft,

Where AVON holds his magic cell !

Where throngs illum'd of every nation

The chofen fouls of all creation ;

Awake fuch themes as Gods revere,

And from Olympus bend to hear.

Whither upon the seraph's wing
Their Beauties fly as to their native spring.

Man's life with ills is checquer'd o'er:
Heav'n yet imparts her balmy store.

There are which bear of Eden yet the seal;
Beauty and Taste—which Angels see and feel.
Congenial these like twins from high,
At either's fate they live or die.

For what is Taste unless with Beauty crown'd:

And what is Beauty if no Taste is found!

The Hind whose soul to labour yields,

Alas! sees not the Beauty of his fields.

But say, can Beauty e'er obtain,

If feels the spirit ought of pain?

To follow Nature's wond'rous theme,

Repose of soul must be supreme.

And where effode that valued wealth?

But in fair Competence and Health;

In a well-order'd social State ;
Where ranks are rul'd, and none too great.
Equal to bear, and equal to enjoy :
'Tis Beauty's reign—ah ! let not man destroy.

Great Gods ! the riches of a Mind at ease !

'Tis Beauty's Crown in metaphysic Scale :
The Feast which Sages e'er aspire to seize,
In Theſes tell to all the choice regale.
Give to that Mind the touch divine,
To know—Taste—Relish—Glories which furround,
Alive all o'er from feelings which refine
To Agony of rapture, full and without bound.

On eagle's wing he soars o'er all :
Beauty he views throughout the Ball.
E'en when the savage Winter reigns,
And heavy snows involve the plains ;
When rain floods all, and tempest flies,
And Nature one great ruin lies :

Mournful, he marks the Shepherd's note,
Tho' plaintive, sweet the Ruddock's throat.

Scarce more to see the Sun's career,
Come driving glorious up the sphere.

New Spirits flowing in each vein,
New verdures starting in the Plain.

Every Linnet of the grove,
Singing soft his rising Love :

Every burgher of the flood,
Wild with effervescency of blood :

All Nature laughing in her glory,
Whilst Poets love to tell her story.

Nature is Beauty understood,
So far as tends to general good.

Her great magnific and eternal plan
Stands high e'er since the world began.

'Tis Beauty peoples earth's wide regions,
No chasm prevents the rising legions.

What joys the goldfinch's bosom warm,

In a well-order'd social State ;
Where ranks are rul'd, and none too great.
Equal to bear, and equal to enjoy :
'Tis Beauty's reign—ah ! let not man destroy.

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What joys the goldfinch's bosom warm,

To view her Mate's high painted form?
 The Lion, dreaded thro' the Land,
 Crouches to Beauty's strong command.
 Superior Man feels Beauty's pain,
 Far, far above the bestial train.
 In delicacy's sentiments divine,
 Which to a feast sublime the passions fierce refine.

Unknown, unfelt in antient days
 This high-born polish of the Mind,
 Strange brutal force was all the hero's praise,
 And brutal lust rul'd unconfin'd.

Hence scenes of blood the cave disgrace,
 Where Hippodamia's charms were spied:
 The fiercest savage of the savage race
 Saw, lov'd, and seiz'd the screaming Bride,
 Rent her robes, and tore her hair :
 Peace fled, and all was instant horrid war.
 Pelion and Othrys by their fury torn,
 Spoil'd of their Woods shew'd desert and forlorn.

Nor this alone the War from Beauty's charms,
 Ten years saw Troy in horrid arms.
 Her woes from Beauty's cheek befall
 Helen, the lovely cause of all.

What time on Ida's verdant crown
 The Phrygian Shepherd held the prize,

The prize by Discord's Goddess thrown,
 Inscrib'd in Gold—"To brightest Eyes."

Conscious of Beauty's glorious fame
 Three Goddesses the trophy claim;
 Fierce the dispute no God could tame.

The Trojan Boy by Jove's decree,
 Was made of Beauty referee.

JUNO advanc'd, of empire vain,
 Redundant flow'd her purple train:

She shew'd in vision wide spread region,
 And promis'd him supreme dominion.

But PALLAS shot before his eye,
 Bright in a golden panoply;

Presents

Presents her Code of high renown,
 And offer'd Wisdom's laurell'd Crown.
 Perplex'd the youthful Judge appear'd,
 When VENUS' soft-ton'd voice was heard.
 A filken scarf light-rob'd the Queen,
 Yet every beauteous limb was seen.
 " Give me the Prize, O Youth of Troy !"
 " And Love shall gild your hours with joy."
 " A Nymph of more than mortal charms,"
 " Shall revel in your warmest arms."
 True to the word of his commission,
 (What Judge more strict, in due submission ?)
 He cries—" To Beauty"—this is due :
 Your charms Celestials give to view.
 A pause enfues—but Pallas first
 Of all her shining arms amerc'd,
 Came forth as for the bath design'd :
 A flowing vest her Form entwin'd.
 Nor haughty Juno long demurr'd,
 Soon to his eye her shape prefer'd.

A flight

A flight cymar of purest blue
Scarce shaded Beauty's finest hue.

Then VENUS rose divinely fair,
She took Charlotta's form and air;
Charlotta's charming height and flowing hair.

A blush ran o'er her dimpled face;
A conscious smile begat new grace:
And as the cobweb Lawn withdrew,
Charlotta's bosom rose to view.
Her bosom!—Gods! 'twas madnefs' dwelling,
Snowy white and softly swelling.
Look not, fond youth—O Muse, forbear,
And shun the pangs of amorous War.
The Cestus spread—nor spread too late,
Then fav'd the Shepherd from his fate.

He view'd—and waver'd like the wind:
When Cupid,—Imp of wily pride,

Soon

Soon turn'd the balance of his mind,
 For stealing to his mother's side,
 Snatch'd the concealing Veil away,
 Reveal'd to ever conscious day,
 Beauty complete—'Tis thine, he cries,
 'Tis thine, dear Venus, thine's the prize.

